

## Characters

**Ponyboy Curtis** – At 14 years old, the youngest Curtis brother and greaser. Ponyboy is intelligent and sensitive and has certain un-greaserlike characteristics: he likes to go to movies by himself, does well in school, and appreciates sunsets. The events of the novel cause him to think about the kind of life he wants to lead and motivate him to work for change in his community. He learns to see the humanity in his enemies, and takes steps to help others see that humanity as well.

**Darry Curtis** – The oldest of the Curtis brothers. Darry is 20, hardworking, and rarely shows his feelings. After the boys' parents died, Darry passed up a college scholarship and took responsibility for raising his younger brothers. Darry has high expectations for Ponyboy, and Ponyboy's occasional failure to meet those expectations causes tension between the brothers. Over the course of the novel, Darry learns how to show Ponyboy that he cares about him.

**Sodapop Curtis** – The middle Curtis brother. Sodapop is handsome and fun-loving. A high school dropout who enjoys working with cars and has a job at a gas station, he is a compassionate and supportive sibling to his two brothers. He often finds himself in the middle of their fights.

**Johnny Cade** – The second youngest of the greasers. Johnny is 16, a close friend to Ponyboy, and beloved by the entire gang. He comes from an abusive and neglectful home, and he spends as little time there as possible. The greasers are his true family, and they regard him as a little brother. Johnny's courageous acts and words, as well as his premature death, inspire Ponyboy to write about his experiences and to pursue a better path in his life.

**Dallas Winston** – A tough, hardened greaser. Dally grew up on the streets of New York and learned early to depend upon himself. He has a long criminal record and is prone to risk-taking, yet he is also a loyal and compassionate friend. He is devoted to Johnny, in whom he sees the potential that he himself has lost.

**Two-Bit Mathews** – The oldest of the greaser gang. Two-Bit is quick-witted and is always telling jokes. Ponyboy appreciates that Two-Bit treats him as an equal.

**Steve Randle** – Sodapop's best friend. Steve works with Sodapop at the gas station and spends a lot of time at the Curtis home. Ponyboy feels that Steve regards him as a child and a tagalong.

**Bob Sheldon** – The leader of the Socs and Cherry's boyfriend. Bob is a tough, intimidating boy who gets killed by Johnny when he and his friends attack Johnny and Ponyboy. Over the course of the novel, Ponyboy learns that Bob had his own troubles and difficulties growing up.

**Randy Adderson** – Bob's best friend and Marcia's boyfriend. Randy is a Soc who participates in the attack on Ponyboy and Johnny. In the aftermath of Bob's death, Randy becomes introspective, befriends Ponyboy, and works to end the violence between the Socs and greasers.

**Cherry Valance** – A Soc and Bob's girlfriend. Cherry is open-minded, sensitive, and courageous. She befriends Ponyboy early in the novel and helps him to see that Socs are people, too. After Bob dies, Cherry plays a minor role as a liaison between the two gangs. Ponyboy always keeps in mind her contention that, despite the superficial differences between them, the Socs and greasers see the same sunset.

**Marcia** – Cherry's best friend and Randy's girlfriend.

**Sandy** – A greaser girl and Sodapop's first love, she breaks Soda's heart when she moves to Florida to have a baby that isn't his and refuses his offer of marriage.

**Buck Merrill** – Dally's friend and rodeo partner. He is a tough guy known for throwing wild parties.

**Tim Shepard** – Leader of the Shepard gang, a gang friendly to, but tougher than, the greasers. Tim is a good friend of Dally's.

**Curly Shepard** – Tim Shepard's younger brother.

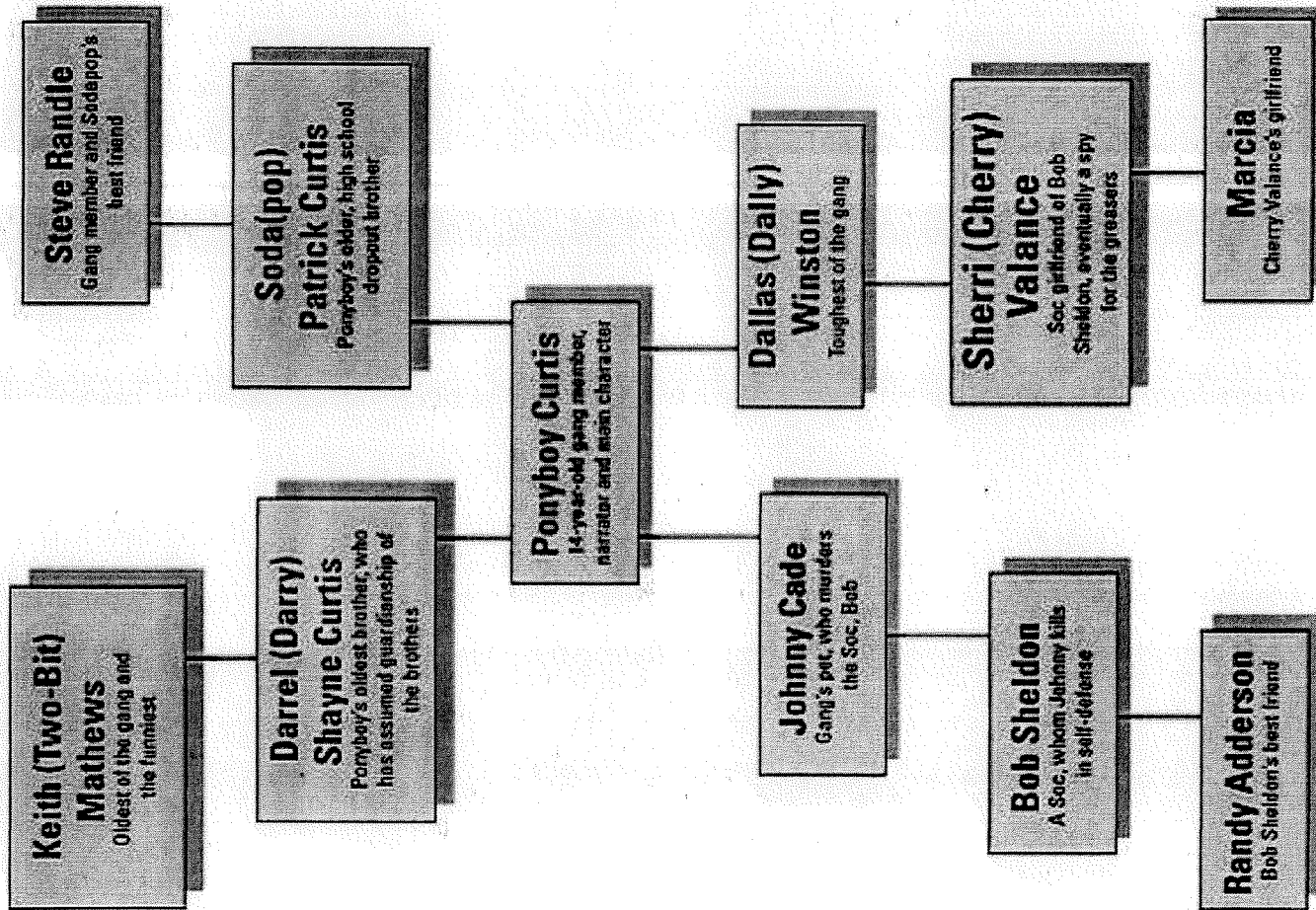
**Mr. Syme** – Ponyboy's English teacher. He gives Ponyboy a second chance when his grades are slipping. An essay he assigns to Ponyboy and his gang turns into the novel itself.

**Jerry Wood** – An elementary school teacher whose students are saved by Johnny and Ponyboy in the church fire. Jerry accompanies Ponyboy and encourages Ponyboy to see himself as a hero, despite the details Ponyboy shares about Bob's death and Dally's criminal past.

**Mrs. O'Briant** – An elementary school teacher whose students are saved by Johnny and Ponyboy in the church fire.

**Mrs. Cade** – Johnny's mother.

**Paul Holden** – A former friend of Darry's from high school, he's gone to college and fights Darry during the rumble.



## Glossary

**amplifier 1** a person or thing that amplifies **2** *Electronics* a device, especially one with electron tubes or semiconductors, used to increase the strength of an electric signal.

**booze-hound** [Slang] a drunk.

**buckskin** a yellowish-gray horse.

**chessy cat** [Slang] Cheshire cat, a proverbial grinning cat from Cheshire, England, especially one described in Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*.

**conformity** the condition or fact of being in harmony or agreement; correspondence; congruity; similarity.

**contemptuously** in a manner full of contempt; scornfully; disdainfully.

**the cooler** [Slang] jail.

**corn-poney** [Slang] unsophisticated, cornball.

**Corvair** a Chevrolet automobile model.

**cur** a dog of mixed breed; mongrel.

**doggedly** not giving in readily; persistent; stubborn.

**elude** to avoid or escape from by quickness, cunning, and so on; evade.

**exploit** an act remarkable for brilliance or daring; bold deed.

**the fuzz** [Slang] a policeman or the police.

**gallant 1** showy and lively in dress or manner **2** stately; imposing **3** brave and noble; high-spirited and daring.

**groggy** shaky or dizzy, as from a blow; sluggish or dull, as from lack of sleep.

**guardian 1** a person who guards, protects, or takes care of another person, property, and so on; custodian **2** a person legally placed in charge of the affairs of a minor or of a person of unsound mind.

**Hank Williams** (born *Hiram Williams*) (1923-53) U.S. country music singer and composer.

**heater** [Slang] a pistol.

**indignant** feeling or expressing anger or scorn, especially at unjust, mean, or ungrateful action or treatment.

**JD** short for juvenile delinquent.

**madras** a fine, firm cotton cloth, usually striped or plaid, used for shirts, dresses, and so on.

**ornery 1** having an ugly or mean disposition **2** obstinate.

**Paul Newman** (b. 1925) popular actor known for his good looks and blue eyes.

**peroxide** hydrogen peroxide, a liquid used to bleach hair.

**Perry Mason** a television drama from the 1960s that featured a lawyer by the same name.

**pickled** [Slang] intoxicated; drunk.

**premonition 1** a warning in advance; a forewarning **2** a feeling that something, especially something bad, will happen; foreboding; presentiment.

**quarter** short for "quarter horse," any of a breed of light, muscular horse of a solid, usually dark color: because of its quick reactions, it is much used in Western range work and in rodeos.

**Robert Frost** (1874-1963) U.S. poet.

**savvy** [Slang] to understand; get the idea.

**snooker** a variety of the game of pool played with fifteen red balls and six other balls.

**soused** [Slang] intoxicated.

**stupor** a state in which the mind and senses are dulled; partial or complete loss of sensibility, as from the use of a narcotic or from shock.

**T-bird** [Slang] a Ford Thunderbird.

**weed** [Informal] a cigar or cigarette.

**Will Rogers** (born *William Penn Adair Rogers*) (1879-1935) U.S. humorist and actor.